

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR EAST TIMOR (IFET)

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to: People at the Lisbon East Timor conference
from: Charles Scheiner, IFET UN Representative
date: May 31, 1995
re: Petitioning the U.N. Committee on Decolonization in New York this July

The annual meeting of the United Nations Decolonization Committee (the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples), also known as the Special Committee of 24, will probably begin at U.N. headquarters in New York on July 10, 1995. The session will last 2-3 weeks. Although the U.N. has not set the exact dates, testimony on East Timor is usually taken during the first few days.

East Timor is one of the principal items on the agenda of this committee, which prepares reports for the General Assembly. As in previous years, supporters of East Timorese self-determination from all over the world will present petitions. In each year since 1992, more than 20 petitioners presented the Committee with a wide range of information and recommendations. There is a need for more statements from Third World countries, especially Asia. Last year, the following testified:

- CNRM, Fretilin, and UDT
- Parliamentarians for East Timor, including MPs from Sweden, the U.S. and Portugal
- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Asia, the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor, International League for Human Rights
- Pax Christi International, the Catholic Institute for International Relations
- East Timor solidarity groups from Australia, Japan, Canada, US, UK, France, Italy and Philippines
- Several individuals with first-hand experience
- Three pro-integration East Timorese

Any organization or individual, whether or not registered with the UN, can speak. Statements are presented orally and also submitted in writing for the interpreters.

If you would like to present a petition (keep it to 15 minutes or less), fax or write the chairman of the committee now (+1-212-963-5305 in New York). If you want to make a statement but cannot send a representative to New York, someone from the East Timor Action Network/US can read your petition (in English, Spanish or French) to the Committee. Please let us know as soon as possible. We will let you know who will present it, and then you can re-fax the UN with the correct name.

ETAN and IFET will help provide housing for overseas visitors, and we will arrange some meetings and hospitality. Please tell us if you are coming. Feel free to ask us any questions, or call the U.N. at 1-212-963-5443.

Here is a sample letter. Don't follow it exactly, but be equally to the point.

Chairman, Special Committee of 24
United Nations, New York, New York 10017 USA
By fax to (212) 963-5305

Dear Sir:

The East Timor Action Network/United States would like to present a petition to the Special Committee at your session this July. Our petition will discuss human rights and self-determination for the people of East Timor.

Please let us know the exact dates when petitions will be heard.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,